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THE.  
NEGRO SLAVES,  
A  
DRAMATIC-HISTORICAL PIECE,  
IN THREE ACTS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN  
OF  
THE PRESIDENT DE KOTZEBUE.

---

*Form'd with the same capacity of pain,  
The same desire of pleasure and of ease,  
Why feels not man for man?*

THE WRONGS OF AFRICA.

---

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, JUNIOR, AND W. DAVIES,  
(SUCCESSORS TO MR. CADELL) IN THE STRAND;  
AND J. EDWARDS, IN PALL-MALL.

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1796.



# DEDICATION,

BY THE TRANSLATOR,

TO

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq.

---

FRIEND OF NEGROES!

**ALLOW** me to introduce myself as having long been an attentive observer of your active zeal for the abolishment of slavery, and establishing so large a portion of mankind in the natural rights of humanity: it is therefore under such an impression, that an unknown humble Translator ventures to make a first offering to you of these endeavors to bring the English reader acquainted with the following little piece.—The histories, the foundations of which you have traced, and know to be too genuine, are there wrought up into a highly interesting little plot, to serve the same cause, in which you have been working so many years past; and you will there see that the Germans have a just ve-



have addressed your monarch, I might have graced these pages with the exalted name of Bernstoff—too great for the application of an epithet; but the ingenuous overflowings of philanthropy would most probably have been mistaken for cold flattery. And I prefer speaking at once to the honest Danes, who understand me, and who know that I never sell my praises.—Here in rural solitude, at a distance from all that can be justly or unjustly called great, surrounded only by the charms of nature; here, where love, friendship, independence crown my head daily with fresh flowers; from hence will I stretch out my hand to my brave friend, and intreat him in the midst of his more public walk, sometimes to cast an eye on the peaceful shore, where his friend has raised himself a cottage under shady elms.

*July 13th, 1795.*

# P R E F A C E

BY THE AUTHOR.

---

**T**HE Author entreats his readers, spectators, and critics, not to consider this piece merely as a drama. It is intended to represent at one view all the horrible cruelties which are practised towards our black brethren. The poet has given them a simple cloathing, without any of the embellishments of invention. Raynal's *Histoire Philosophique*, Selle's *History of the Negro-trade*, Sprengel on *Negro-trade*, Isert's *Travels into Guinea*, the famous *Black Code*, and several scattered Tracts in periodical works, have fully supplied him with the materials. It is with a deep sigh that he is forced to acknowledge that not one melancholy fact is

brought forth in this piece, which was not strictly founded in truth. Even the catastrophe itself is known to have taken place, and Ada's last narration is borrowed from Raynal.\* The prayer of the Slaves over the grave of their master is an affecting anecdote which is related by the great and good Albuquerque.† The Author is not ashamed to confess that while he was writing this piece he shed a thousand tears. Should his readers or spectators mix their tears with his, his labor would then have some reward.

A few words for Negroes in general. There are philosophers who believe that nature has made as much difference between the Negroes and Europeans in their intellectual capacities as between the cur-dog and the hound. I will relate two authentic anecdotes, after the reading of which, each may himself judge of the justice of this idea.

\* Hist. Philosophique & Politique. tom. 5. liv. 14. chap. 44. p. 212.

† Alphonse Albuquerque, nommé par la cour de Lisbonne vice-roi de l'Inde; le plus éclairé des Portugais qui fussent passés en Asie. En 1515, Il mourut à Goa, adoré des Indiens.—Raynal's Hist. Philos. tom. 1. p. 61—94.

Murray \* was left sick upon the African coast. A Negro took him to his home, and nursed him. A Dutch ship appeared, stole some men on the banks, and escaped. The father and brother of the stolen were enraged, they hastened down to the cottage where Murray lay, and wanted to sacrifice him to their revenge. His charitable host came forth to the door; "You must first kill me, he cried, before you touch a hair of my guest. Kill the robber wherever you find him, but not an innocent sick man, whom sacred hospitality protects.—Would you for ever stamp such a disgrace on my cottage that no stranger should again ask of me a draught of palm-wine?" The Negroes at this took shame to themselves, and returned, and wept over their lost brethren, but refrained from exercising any revenge on the innocent White; they even acknowledged to Murray himself how happy they were at having been deterred from executing a crime, which would have caused them eternal remorse.

Louis Desfrouleaux sold his plantation and returned to his own country. The charms of the

\* Raynal's Hist. Philos. tom. 4. liv. 11. chap. 28. p. 155.

metropolis soon absorbed his whole fortune, and he found himself obliged to fly a beggar to America. There, where his European friends coldly withdrew from him, a Negro threw himself at his feet, (whom he had formerly loaded with acts of generosity, and to whom, at last, he had given his freedom.) The diligent honest man had in the mean time gained himself a little independency, and was in possession of a house and garden, a wife, and a child. He embraced the knees of his old master, and would not quit him, till with prayers he had prevailed upon him to consent to partake his dwelling, and to accept an annuity from him of 1500 livres.— Both these men were living in the year 1774.

Many traits in this piece are too horrible, and therefore, in the representation, several of them were omitted. This might be attended with advantage on the theatre; but in the publication, the author has been obliged to restore all the omissions, otherwise his piece would not have had any claim to the title of an Historical Piece.



*PERSONS of the DRAMA.*

---

JOHN, a rich Planter.

WILLIAM, his Brother.

ADA, }  
LILLI, } Two Young Female Negro-Slaves.

AYOS, }  
ZAMEO, } Negro-Slaves.

TRURO, an Old Free Negro.

PAUL, the Superintendent or Overseer of the  
Slaves.

MALE and FEMALE NEGROES.

*The Scene is in the Island of Jamaica.*

THE  
NEGRO SLAVES.

---

ACT I.

SCENE I.

*Room in JOHN'S House. (ADA working at a Cotton-Mill.—LILLI dances, while she beats a small Kettle-Drum and sings to it.)*

LILLI.

*STOPS and takes breath*)—Oh I must rest.

ADA.

Are you tired at last?

LILLI.

Yes, I am tired; but the body is not so soon exhausted as the mind; we can dance longer than think.

B



ADA.

Do we not always think ?

LILLI.

Yes, unfortunately ! Alas, it were better for a slave never to think.

ADA.

And never to feel !

LILLI.

And to do every thing sleeping. Dost not thou think so, Ada ?—If one could sleep for ever !

ADA.

In the grave ?

LILLI.

Oh no. On flowers rather.

ADA.

Is not that the same thing ? Death is sleep without breathing.

LILLI.

But so cold—so lonesome !

ADA.

And without dreams.

LILLI.

So much the worse ! Dreams are the best gifts to man in this world.

ADA.

Thou art very right. My sleep is one continued dream of him !

LILLI.

And thy waking moments too. It is ridiculous and teasing to have a man live so in one's dreams.—Well ! No man's image dances around my bed.

ADA.

Unfortunate me ! Reft is a stranger in my chamber.

LILLI.

Love and Reft are a couple of children who quarrel every moment at their play—or rather, Love only is the child ; Reft is an old man whom the wild boy plucks by the beard.

ADA.

Happy girl ! to whom the laughing fide of every thing presents itself.

LILLI.

Do as I do ; forget because you must.

ADA.

I cannot,—and I would not, if I could ; every object around, that bears the most distant analogy, brings before me the image of my lost husband.—If I accidentally see a man come out of a wood, with his gun on his shoulder, and his

bird slain—just so did he come home from his sport. If I behold another on the sea-shore angling for fish;—just so was he wont to sit while I looked for speckled shells to adorn myself with, for him.—The sound of the kettle-drum reminds me of his flexible limbs in dancing; and when the gentle zephyrs wanton, methinks I see the winds at play with his curling woolly hair.

LILLI.

It is vain to think of living for others.

ADA.

Alas! the most satisfactory hours with which mankind are blessed, are those in which the happiness of others is interwoven.

LILLI.

Man and wife must form one whole? Be it so! but this whole must resemble the polypus. Cut it asunder, and then each part exists for itself. *(She eats of a pine-apple which stands on the table)* Dancing makes me thirsty. Will you eat any pine-apple?

ADA.

I can never look at that fruit, without growing melancholy.—In the last beautiful evening of our tranquil happiness, when he had been planting bananas all the day in a hot sun, and had watered them with the sweat of his brow, when he came home from the field, and threw himself tired on the bank, then an unfortunate longing

possessed me, to eat a pine-apple. In a moment he took fright for the pledge of our love, which I was then bearing; he sprung up, forgot his fatigue, and ran to satisfy my childish wish.—I stood before the cottage and watched him from the meadow over the hill till the declivity hid him from my sight. There he disappeared in the wood—He disappeared!—and I have never seen him since! I continued to stand, and smile in the setting-sun, with eager impatience waiting his return, when these pirates, who had landed secretly on the sea-shore, suddenly laid hands on me, and carried me off senseless. Oh think of the miserable man, when he found his cottage empty, and echoed my name to no purpose over the hills.

LILLI.

And is thine a worse case than mine? I was sold by my own mother. God bless her! She was very poor.

ADA.

Thou hast the consolation of having relieved thy mother. But what have I?

LILLI.

Time and habit.

ADA.

Alas! Time will not efface all the past, and habit merely covers the gulph like rushes in the

sea; if you once forget to advance gently, you sink directly.

LILLI.

Oh no. Habit will at last give variety to a prison, though it were no larger than a coconut. (*She beats the drum.*) Throw thy work aside, and let us dance.

ADA.

I cannot do what, if he saw me, I should be ashamed of.

LILLI.

Ashamed of? Dancing is sacred. Hast thou not often danced in the temple of Fetiche?\*

ADA.

And yet in dancing there is always an expression of joy.—He weeps, and shall I dance?

LILLI.

If thou wilt not, I must dance alone; with every step, I drive away a care, and every stroke of the drum stuns some disagreeable thought. (*She dances, sings, and drums.*)

ADA.

Happy girl! who winds out her days with as little thought, as I this cotton.

\* The Fetiches are deities of the Negroes of Guinea.—For some account of them, see Bell's Pantheon.

SCENE II.

*Enter TRURO.*

TRURO.

Halloo ! Children ! are ye not ashamed ? Here you are dancing, whilst they are howling underneath.

LILLI.

Come, help me to cheer Ada.

TRURO.

What does she want ?

LILLI.

Do you not see how she drowns the cotton in tears, as if she intended to light a lamp to affliction, and that she is actually twisting the wick ?

TRURO.

Those who have no hardships to bear, are sure to invent some.

ADA.

Do I suffer no hardships ?

TRURO.

Perhaps you call it a hardship to gormandise at a dainty table, while we are forced to eat insipid broth ? to be permitted to stretch your limbs on soft mattresses, while we, scorched

with the burning sun, and waked with stripes of the whip, bedew the hard ground with sweat and blood ? perhaps it is to you a hardship, that our master, who loves nothing, and nobody in the world, yet does homage to your charms ?

LILLI.

You, perhaps, would call it a blessing that our master who loves nobody, should endeavour with the same violence that the juice is pressed from the sugar-cane, to obtain a return of love from Ada ?

TRURO.

What would you have ? I envy women. Men are subdued by nothing but love, while women yield from obedience and it passes for love.

ADA.

I understand you ;—but I have a husband.

TRURO.

Can he deliver you ?—You are not however a king's wife, that according to our laws, to touch you is death.

ADA.

It is love alone, not royal dignities that can make a woman faithful.

TRURO.

It is in your power to lessen the severity both of your fate and our's ; of your's by submission, of our's by gentle entreaties.

ADA.

Do not torment me; my innocence is my husband's sanctuary. With the loss of it, I should also be deprived of my only remaining support, that of thinking of him.

TRURO.

Thou art a brave woman! but it is only now and then that the heart of man is under the dominion of virtue, while the influence of power always surpasses it.

LILLI.

If experience has taught you nothing better, it hardly answers the pain of being so old.

ADA.

There is no power stronger than despair.

LILLI.

He gave her a fortnight to consider.

ADA.

I have considered the whole. He may root up the flower, but he cannot gather it.

LILLI.

Oh that our old master yet lived!

TRURO.

We all wish the same.

ADA.

I hope to see him soon.



TRURO.

His younger son, who is lately come from Europe, is like him. It is pity that he is not the master of this plantation.

LILLI.

What do you think, Truro? Must not Europe be a good country since men grow better there?

TRURO.

Hem! One swallow makes no summer. None of the Whites are good for any thing.

LILLI.

Hush! the walls have ears. I hear the voice of our wicked master.

ADA.

The hour of trial is at hand!

### SCENE III.

*Enter JOHN and WILLIAM.*

JOHN.

*(In conversation.)* No, brother, that you do not understand. I have never read Cicero; but if instead of starving or whipping, I chose to keep an orator to remind the slaves of their duty—

WILLIAM.

*(Muttering between his teeth)* Have slaves duties too?

JOHN.

Is it well in the English peasant, when he puts the oxen to the plough, to shake the whip over them?

WILLIAM.

Excellent comparison!

JOHN.

Believe me, hunger is even more persuasive than Fox, and a single crack of the whip operates more powerfully than all the eloquence of a Burke.

WILLIAM.

If my lips are silent, my heart loudly contradicts.

JOHN.

Your heart! your heart! empty prating! I should like to know why men are so ready to impute to their hearts, the enthusiastic notions of their heads?—The heart is merely a lump of flesh, nothing more. It is just as much heeded by the inclination, as the leg or arm.—Overload the stomach, and the heart will palpitate.—Our father, God blefs him! was just like you; he was always talking of his heart.

WILLIAM.

Enough, brother! I only waste my words, and I should be sorry if the result was to diminish our brotherly affection.

JOHN.

God forbid ! You are mistaken in imagining that I have no taste for what you are pleased to call tender sentiment. Only it is not so finely sharpened with European air as your's ; nor am I perhaps as tender as one of those angels, a million of whom can dance on the point of a needle. But as an instance, I feel that Ada is a beautiful woman, and that I shall never be happy unless I possess her.—What think you, Ada ? is the fortnight almost gone ?

ADA.

I understand you. It is gone !

JOHN.

Really ? Then you have kept the best account. A favorable sign.

ADA.

You are mistaken.

JOHN.

Now for your determination ?

ADA.

Still the same.

JOHN.

You are joking, my child.

ADA.

Is it usual to joke with crying eyes and a bleeding heart ?

JOHN.

There we have it! there comes the heart again. What a damned phrase it is! I will pawn my life your heart bleeds not a drop more than it did before. As to your tears, you may shed them or swallow them, just as you please. For I have no more mind to joke, and I herewith give you very serious notice that in four and twenty hours you are mine.

ADA.

No, you shall not use force! I am married, I love my husband—I cannot love you—No, you shall not use force.

JOHN.

Force? Hem! since this fails,—I once made a wild girl so tame.—

LILLI.

How?

JOHN.

I had her whole body pricked with needles; then cotton dipped in oil was twisted round her fingers, and lighted.—Three days after she loved me most tenderly.

WILLIAM.

(*Seizing him by the band*) Brother! Can that be true? Did you do it?

JOHN.

Most certainly; and I assure you it succeeded.

WILLIAM.

It is impossible we should have been born of the same mother !

JOHN.

(*Coldly*) I have however heard it for certain.

ADA.

(*To JOHN*) You may put me to torture—You may break my heart—but you cannot make me unfaithful.

JOHN.

The heart is soon again ! little fool, do what you will with your heart, the subject here in question is your elegant person.

ADA.

If you indeed loved me, you would not wish for one without the other.

LILLI.

(*Cunningly to JOHN*) Why are not you in love with me ?

JOHN.

Because you are a monkey.

LILLI.

(*Aside*) Hem ! methinks monkeys suit apes.

JOHN.

Do you hear, Ada ? if you would be but half as obliging as your companion, who actually offers herself to me—

LILLI.

Who? I?

JOHN.

Did you not just now put the question to me?

LILLI.

Yes, and why? Because I have more spirit than Ada, because I could tear out your eyes.

JOHN.

You are two little fools, who abuse my patience. Withdraw, I have business.

LILLI.

It appears to me that you treat love exactly like business.

JOHN.

Are you weeping, Ada?

ADA.

I am weeping.

JOHN.

Be gone, and I forbid your weeping.

ADA.

And can you forbid me to die too?

[Exit ADA.]

JOHN.

Folly! Is not death a baby? Give a glass coral, and life has fresh charms.

LILLI.

*(Slily approaching him)* And flaming cotton round the fingers?

JOHN.

Yes.

LILLI.

And needles stuck all over the body?

JOHN.

Yes.

LILLI.

And that produces love?

JOHN.

Affuredly.

LILLI.

This will kill me with laughing. *(She laughs in his face and runs away.)*

JOHN.

Wicked girl! She makes Ada fly me as if I had the leprosy. *(To TRURO)* Go, old man, and fetch a bundle of reeds.

WILLIAM.

Why not serpents to sting thee?

JOHN.

Ha, ha, ha, an oriental hyperbole! Out, old curled head, call the Overseer to me. You are a very woman, when it comes to flogging.

TRURO.

Indeed master ! you are making a fine oration about women and me. *[Exit TRURO.]*

WILLIAM.

Will constrained love afford you any enjoyment ?

JOHN.

Why not ? I gather a rose, the thorns prick a little, but still I gather it, and its perfumes are not the less sweet.

WILLIAM.

Sell me that woman.

JOHN.

Your humble servant ! Here we have the Enthusiast.—He preaches and preaches, runs over the most exalted sentiments, and at last, wants to buy her for himself.

WILLIAM.

*(Contemptuously)* Must I answer this ?—Well, brother, I will give you a hundred guineas.

JOHN.

A hundred guineas ? As much as that ? No, I shall not part with her at present.

WILLIAM.

Thou art a tyrant.

*(He sits down, and draws a book out of his pocket.)*

C



JOHN.

Excellent ! Dost thou learn those fine fraternal appellations from thy book ? What an abominable thing is reading ? by this means, the mind is put into a hot-house and forced like a pineapple in Europe ; and then produces bad fruit. —If my father had not taught the women to read, I am sure they would have been more reasonable.

WILLIAM.

(*Exasperated.*) You are right. Reading was the forbidden tree in Paradise.

#### SCENE IV.

*Enter* OVERSEER.

OVERSEER.

Did you fend for me ?

JOHN.

You are come too late, my anger has subsided.

WILLIAM.

Your anger ? You spoke with a sort of coldness which is not properly anger.

JOHN.

Why not ? Some of us are as much accustomed to anger as a courtier is to smiles. I am the whole day in a passion, but it is never seen.

WILLIAM.

So much the worse.

JOHN.

(*To the Overseer.*) How have you disposed of the slaves?

OVERSEER.

Some are grinding coffee at the mill, others are sifting roucou \* in the kettles, and boiling it. The children are weeding the tares from among the cotton-bushes.

JOHN.

Very good, but how goes on the sugar?

OVERSEER.

I have ordered old Ben's back to be flayed, and salt and Spanish pepper to be strewed on it.

JOHN.

Why?

OVERSEER.

Because there was too little fire for the first kettle, and too much for the fourth.

JOHN.

Oh the rascal! Why did not you order him to be skinned, to make him feel the more?

\* A red dye from the pellicles of the seeds of an American tree. For a particular account of it, see Raynal's Hist. Phil. torn. 5. p. 18.

OVERSEER.

That was not wanted. The heat of the fire before which he is constantly sweating, has so parched him, that at every stroke, the skin rose from the bones as the shell does from the coffee.

WILLIAM.

*(Shuts up his book in a passion. His face reddens with indignation.)*

JOHN.

He will be too old, soon, we must let him die quietly by degrees.

WILLIAM.

Die quietly? How do you manage that?

JOHN.

Let him work less, and give him less to eat, till at last he goes out like a candle.

WILLIAM.

*(Repressing his anger)* Brother, if you will but let the devil know that you have set up a school here, I will bet a wager he comes to take a lesson of you.

JOHN.

Ha, ha, ha! that would be too great an honor.  
*(To the Overseer)* Have you already conducted the new slaves to their work?

OVERSEER.

Not yet. You know our old foolish custom of bathing them in the sea for ten days after their arrival, and feeding them well, before we employ them. The fools always think that we are only fattening them in order to eat them.

WILLIAM.

The question is, which would be best?

OVERSEER.

One of them asked me very seriously whether my shoes were made of negro-leather, because they were black!

WILLIAM.

No very extraordinary question from men who are fayed every day.

OVERSEER.

Amongst the rest, there is an old man, who is tormenting me daily to bring him to you. He says he will and must speak to you, that he shall die of grief if he is not allowed to open his heart to you.

JOHN.

What does the fool want?

OVERSEER.

I have brought him here. Will you see him?

JOHN.

You have raised my curiosity, let him come in.

[Exit OVERSEER.]

JOHN.

Do you see, brother, how good I am? I listen to every old dotard. It is a weakness I inherit from our father.

WILLIAM.

*(Gives him a satirical contemptuous look, and is silent.)*

## SCENE V.

*Enter OVERSEER, and AYOS.*

OVERSEER.

Here I bring him.

AYOS.

*(Prostrating himself at JOHN's feet)* Master, I kifs the duft under your feet.

JOHN.

Arife. I do not like that, lefs humility and more work. You are an old boy, I fuppose you was fold for a couple of yards of linen, and some bottles of brandy.

AYOS.

I was not fold at all, I gave myself away.

JOHN.

Gave yourself away?

AYOS.

Or I fold myself, which you will. I fold my liberty for the only remaining comfort of my life, the hope of seeing my fon once more.

JOHN.

Your fon? Where is he?

AYOS.

Aye, where is he? That, I ask you, my good master; you cannot be so cruel as this man who will not answer me yes or no.

OVERSEER.

Have I nothing to do then but to answer you? if I was to hold a conversation with every slave about his own family, the plantation would soon go to ruin.

JOHN.

He is in the right. Laziness will not do here, as in your hot sandy deserts.

AYOS.

Alas! I will most readily work, as much as an old man can, who has seen the banana bloom seventy times; only restore to me my Zameo! You will be a gainer by it, for with my son by my side, I shall grow young again, lively and active.—Joy gives strength.

JOHN.

(*To the OVERSEER*) Zameo? have we a slave of that name?

OVERSEER.

(*With great indifference*) I believe we have.

AYOS.

Now at last! I thank thee for those words! though you can utter them so coldly, they warm

me more than the hot spices of the Molucca Islands.

JOHN.

How did you gain the exact intelligence that your son was brought here in my ship?

AYOS.

Was not this the price for which I sold my liberty? Do you think I did not know the ship which not a year ago carried my Zameo away? Oh! if you knew in what manner my Zameo became a slave—

JOHN.

I will not know it. Be gone! I have enough of whimpering.

WILLIAM.

(Rises) Brother, I beseech you, let him tell.

JOHN.

Certainly. It will be a mental feast for a European Philosopher. Well, tell then.

AYOS.

I fought in the battle against the Negroes of Afla, and was taken. They sold me on the sea-coast. A wife and two sons wept over me, then came my youngest son whom I had not seen for many years, love having enticed him into another country. But now that he had lost his wife, life was become a burden to him, and hearing of my

misfortune, he flew to me, threw himself at the slave-merchant's feet, and begged that my chains might be transferred to him. The hard-hearted man beheld the fine strong youth, set me at liberty without further consideration, chained my Zameo, and pushed him down into the ship's hold. He looked once around him, on me and his brothers, smiled, and disappeared.

WILLIAM.

And why are you now stealing from him the fruits of his filial affection? Why did you renounce your own liberty?

AYOS.

Alas! my good master, my wife is dead, my sons are slain in battle, and my grand-children were taken off by the small-pox. I was alone in the world, and I had nothing left but my Zameo, who was suffering afar off for me. What could I do? I thought then, it would be better to share his sufferings, than to consume the rest of my days in solitary tears over the grave. The dead hear not my complaints, my son lives, and shall hear them.

JOHN.

Enough of your whimpering. (*To the Overseer*) Go, take him down to his son, and let him enjoy himself for a few minutes.



AYOS.

Alas ! a few minutes is a long time for an old man !—I shall see my Zameo once more !—Can I go down without trembling ?—Excuse me, good master, and do not imagine that I am always so weak.—Oh I can still work, but joy at this moment trembles in all my limbs.—(*To the Overseer*) I beseech you to support me.

OVERSEER.

(*Pusses him on before him*) Along, old boy ! Thou wilt go down without me.

AYOS.

(*Shaking as he walks*) Oh, yes, I willingly go—Zameo !—to thee—to thee—

[*Exit with the Overseer.*]

## SCENE VI.

JOHN and WILLIAM.

WILLIAM.

Brother, do you know you are carrying on a vile trade ?

JOHN.

How so ?

WILLIAM.

I cannot relish a morsel in your house.

JOHN.

I am sorry for that.

WILLIAM.

I find no repose in your beds.

JOHN.

I sleep very well,

WILLIAM.

When the Overseer flogs out the poor slaves at sun-rise, do their cries never wake you?

JOHN.

I am used to it.

WILLIAM.

Righteous God! is it in the nature of man to reconcile himself to every thing, and even to wean himself from common humanity?

JOHN.

What can I do? You would not have me cultivate the sugar-canes myself?

WILLIAM.

And is it absolutely necessary they should be cultivated?

JOHN.

What a wonderful question!

WILLIAM.

Tell me, brother, do you think slaves are men?  
—I bet a wager he is often asked this question.

JOHN.

I treat them as men.

WILLIAM.

*(Ironically)* Indeed?

JOHN.

I give them to eat and to drink.

WILLIAM.

You do the same to your dogs.

JOHN.

And they are not much better than dogs.  
Believe me, brother, they are a race, destined  
by nature to slavery.

WILLIAM.

Where has God stamped the mark of slavery  
on them?

JOHN.

They descend from Cain, they are black, because the father of their family was the first who killed his brother.

WILLIAM.

Excellent!

JOHN.

They are cunning, vicious and stupid. They acknowledge the superiority of our minds, and of course the justice of our dominion.

WILLIAM.

They are stupid because slavery destroys all energy of mind; they are ill-disposed, but they do not shew it to you, as you deserve. They lie, because no one dares to speak the truth to tyrants. They acknowledge the superiority of our minds because we keep them in eternal ignorance; and the justice of our dominion, because we abuse their weakness.—Alas! you have done every thing in the world to depreciate these unhappy wretches, and then you complain that they are stupid and evil-inclined.

JOHN.

But were not Negroes born to be slaves?

WILLIAM.

Certainly not. No man can be born a slave. Whether you are a prince, or a father, who gave you that right?

JOHN.

But if the Negro sold himself! He is master of his life, why not also of his liberty? He himself fixes the price.

WILLIAM.

The liberty of man is invaluable!

JOHN.

So much the worse for him, if he sells me a treasure below its proper worth. He is the fool, but I am no knave.

WILLIAM.

Sell himself? he dares not, because he dares not do all that an unjust master requires of him as a slave.—He belongs to his first master, to God, who never gave him his liberty! a man may sell his life as a soldier, but not the abuse of his life as a slave.

JOHN.

But the greatest part of them were made prisoners in battle; if we had not intervened they would have suffered death.

WILLIAM.

They never would have been made prisoners but for you. Their battles are your work. And if the conqueror makes a bad use of his victory, why would you be his accomplice?

JOHN.

But several were criminals who would have been condemned to death by this time in their own country.

WILLIAM.

And are you the African hangman's deputy?

JOHN.

At least, are they not just as happy here, as there?

WILLIAM.

Then, why do they sigh without intermission after their own country? Why would they chuse rather to live with tigers and lions than with you? Why do they poison and hang themselves? Why out of nine millions of slaves which the new world received, are seven and an half dead?

JOHN.

Do other nations treat them better than we Englishmen?

WILLIAM.

Alas, no! The Spaniard makes the negroes companions of his indolence, the Portuguese makes them subservient to his vices, and the Dutchman abuses them as the victims of his avarice. The Frenchman makes them bend to laborious work, and often refuses them necessities; but he sometimes laughs with them, which lightens their misery. The Englishman never laughs, never shews them any condescension.

JOHN.

I will level all your pretended philosophy at one stroke; without us, they never would have known the Christian religion.—They exchange their freedom for the salvation of their souls.

WILLIAM.

Oh Divine Lawgiver! how couldst thou fore-

see that such cruelties could be justified from thy mild precepts!—If religion sanctifies the crime, away with it for ever! Harangue loudly, ye servants of the church! Preach loudly against it! Zeal would here be wisdom, and silence a transgression.

JOHN.

This is all idle declamation, imported from the universities.—At this rate we shall grow no coffee-trees, nor ripen any sugar-canes. You are in possession of a fine fortune, which our father acquired by means of the negro-slaves, and it makes you happy, is not that true?

*[Exit smiling.]*

WILLIAM.

*(Alone)* Alas! he is right! I blush for every shilling in my pocket! every morsel I put into my mouth is embittered by the tears of suffering human nature.

## SCENE VII..

WILLIAM, ADA, and LILLI.

ADA.

Good white man, do I find you alone? Be not angry. When, just now, your brother was so unkind to me, I plainly saw that it gave you concern, and it immediately occurred to me,

apply to William, he will protect thee. Good white man, I implore thee to protect me!

LILLI.

Thy eyes are like thy father's, friendly good eyes.

WILLIAM.

My dear child, would to God I could help thee!

ADA.

God will assist thee in it, certainly. I am a poor innocent creature who never crushed a worm designedly; why then am I so tormented?

WILLIAM.

Do you call it being tormented, to be beloved?

ADA.

And do you call that love, which your brother requires?

LILLI.

Have you forgot the burning cotton and needles?

WILLIAM.

To be crabbed, and morose, is a habit with him. You should overlook that.

D



ADA.

I cannot, if I would.—I have not room in my heart for two men.

WILLIAM.

Have you left a lover behind you in Africa?

ADA.

Only a lover? much more than a lover! a husband!

WILLIAM.

It is plain you are not a European.

ADA.

We had hardly been as long married as the Banana is in bloom—We lived on the coast; the sea gave us fish, the forest behind supplied us with wild-fowl, on each side of us were the green seedlings of Turkish wheat, and in the centre of all, ourselves, and one heart betwixt us—Believe me, we had enough.

WILLIAM.

I do indeed believe thee, my good child.

ADA.

A little bag with baked Turkey-meal quieted our hunger, and when I brought home my calabash of an evening full of palm-wine, it was more refreshing to us than rum is to the Whites. And when we rested together at night on the

same woven mat, our sleep was sweeter than that of our Chief on his European carpet. Something was with us, and about us, that breathed serenity and a sense of joy, and to which we knew not how to give a name.—It was love!

WILLIAM.

And who destroyed your tranquil happiness?

ADA.

Some white men stole me while my husband was absent. They sold Ada, the stolen slave, to your brother, but they could not sell the loving and beloved Ada. Between those walls of intertwined palm-branches breathes yet the spirit of my love.

WILLIAM.

Of what use is this enthusiastic fidelity to a husband whom thou wilt never see again?

ADA.

I see him continually, and he is before my eyes every where!—Oh you must not talk me out of my last hope!—Never see him again?—What good can it do thee to tear from the hand of an unhappy wretch, the straw to which he clings? and supposing you in the right, what is this instant of time to me?—this little foot of land which you call the world?—A day will come when I shall see him!—Is it not true that you

believe in a better life, where Negroes are allowed to be happy?

LILLI.

Let us laugh then at our white tyrants! This cannot always last.—Our Chief called himself master of heaven and earth, but the earth has obtained its mastery over him, and has covered him. Is it not so? the Whites torment us for a season, but when it grows too bad, we have a friend who is no friend to them. He bears a hideous name. He is called Death. But who would ask the name of his deliverer? Who would take fright at the name of his benefactor?—Huzzah, Ada! Life is only a toy; we are no longer children, we throw it away.

WILLIAM.

Cheerful girl! you suit yourself to your lot!

LILLI.

I was born in Congo. In Congo and Loango, we are ever gay; we live to-day, and enjoy to-day, and think not of the morrow. Of course hospitality dwells in our cottages, and we abhor all meanness. Therefore we call you Europeans close-handed. We think not of the past, we count our years no more than we do the drops of water which the great river revolves under our feet. We believe in the great God Numbo, but who is too much exalted to care about us. In

Congo and Loango, we could laugh whole days at trifles. Our young men are excellent mimics. They understand imitating the cries of animals. They are enlivened whenever they hear music, and dancing never fatigues them.

WILLIAM.

Contented people!

LILLI.

Shall I teach you to be always cheerful?

WILLIAM.

Then thou wilt teach me what a thousand European philosophers have failed in.

LILLI.

Nothing easier. Only observe two rules. Do nothing wrong, and rise hungry from table. By this means the soul and body will always remain in health. I take care of the one, and your brother of the other. (*she laughs.*)

WILLIAM.

Golden rules!

LILLI.

Why golden? I would not confide in the man who compares every thing that is beautiful and good to gold.--Rather call them rules of the fun, for they warm the heart; or rules of death, for they teach us to die cheerfully. Thy father was well

acquainted with them. I always rejoice when I recollect how our old master died.

WILLIAM.

Thou rejoicest?

LILLI.

Yes indeed! he sat on a chair in this room——

WILLIAM.

(*Hastily*) In this room? Where? Where?

LILLI.

(*Pointing to the spot*) There he sat.

WILLIAM.

(*Agitated*) There?—Go on.

LILLI.

He called in all his slaves.—Children, he said, I am going to God.—Father, we cried, give us thy blessing!—then he blessed us, and we blessed him. He smiled---and we cried.

WILLIAM,

I see then thou canst not always laugh.

LILLI.

Why not? Do you mean because of the tears which are rolling down my cheeks? When I cry in this way, my heart at the same time laughs.

WILLIAM.

Good, amiable creature!

LILLI.

Of what use are smooth words to us? Do not praise us, but help us.

WILLIAM.

I cannot.

LILLI.

Why not? Are you not a son of our old master?

WILLIAM.

I am but the youngest brother.

LILLI.

Is it then only in the power of the elder brother to do good?---Divide your riches as you will, but the right of doing good ought to be equally shared between brothers.---You are silent? You consider Ada and me with compassion?---Oh trouble not yourself about me; my guardian angels are Hope and Cheerfulness; but protect Ada, she is in want of both.

ADA.

Protect me, good white man!

WILLIAM.

What can I do?---I have offered my brother a large sum for thy liberty;---He refused it.

LILLI.

He refused money! poor Ada! if he love thee more than money, then thou art lost!

ADA.

Oh, if thy father had lived but a few weeks longer, the vessel was then equipping to carry me to my husband's arms.---My benefactor died ---Well, I too can die!

LILLI.

Hear'st thou---Poor Ada! Look at her. Is she not beautiful as the flower Gloriosa? and she is still more good than beautiful.---Fy! you are horrid people! we lacerate our bodies; you, your souls.---We believe that the scars on our faces add to our beauty; you consider your vices as ornaments.---Which ought to reprove the other?

WILLIAM.

By God! not we!

### SCENE VIII.

TRURO *brings in Coffee.*

TRURO.

Here is the breakfast. (*he sets it on the table.*)

WILLIAM.

What ails thee? thy eyes are swimming in tears!

TRURO.

Oh nothing, good master! the planter must accustom himself to tears, as much as the miner

to pale faces.—If you should once see me laugh, then you may ask, why do you laugh, Truro?

WILLIAM.

Good God! is then Jamaica the island of tears?

TRURO.

It is pity that in this mild climate, and fruitful soil, every thing should grow green, and prosper, but cheerfulness.

WILLIAM.

Say, what excited your tears?

TRURO.

A couple of incidents such as happen every day. The first concerned a poor devil who was crossing the field with a stick, which is absolutely forbidden. We dare not carry arms, not even a cane to defend ourselves from dogs, or to kill a serpent.—The Overseer saw it, and flogged him as usual; the slave whimpered and threw away his stick. Soon after, a mad dog attacked him, he endeavoured to keep him off with his hand, and was bit.—The hydrophobia is now come on, in two days more raving madness will break forth, and then he will be well.

WILLIAM.

Horrible!



TRURO.

The other history is still more agreeable. It is of two brothers who work at the sugar-cauldrons. Alas, master! It is a cruel business, for they are melting the whole day by the fire. The younger brother is not very healthy, he could not any longer endure it, he ran to the wood and hid himself. This morning, they found him. Master John came down, and was very angry. He ordered the eldest brother to lash the youngest till he was half dead; and as he refused this office,—Ah! how could he do otherwise!—He himself was lashed till the blood ran down his back. Suddenly, the poor fellow in his agony seized an ax which lay near him, and cut off his right hand, saying he chose rather to be without a hand, than to use it against his brother. I came just at the time, and saw the bloody stump; and this, like an old fool, makes me cry.

WILLIAM.

Enough! I am quite overcome!

LILLI.

What say you now, good white man?

TRURO.

In this way we are treated, because we are black.

LILLI.

And yet the mother's milk which we sucked was white.

ADA.

And our blood too is warm and red.

WILLIAM.

I should not wonder if it was boiling hot ! or if despair should make it flame, and you were to murder your executioner.

TRURO.

And indeed despair has already occasioned many shocking instances of revenge. There are certain Negroes who amongst their own people pass for forcerers, because they know how to prepare a subtle poison from particular insects, with which they satisfy their thirst for revenge. There are others, who are made still more ingenious by despair. Two years ago, one of our neighbours lashed his unoffending slave barbarously, and then went tranquilly to his plantation. Three little children, whom he left behind, were dragged out on the roof by the sufferer. There he sat, out of breath with revenge, and watching the return of his wicked master, who, now coming home from the field, and looking directly before him, saw his youngest son fall suddenly at his feet. He looked up, terrified—then fell the second. Now, trembling,

he fell on his knees, and supplicated for the life of the third—but in vain!—even the third, and at last, the slave himself lay dead at his feet.

WILLIAM.

Horrible! Oh why do you not hide yourselves in caverns and woods?

TRURO.

Some of us do, but if they are discovered, their ears are, the first time, cut off; the second time they are ham-stringed, and branded on the shoulder. The third time, they must die without favor.

WILLIAM.

Is there then no court of justice in the country, where you might complain of your oppressions?

TRURO.

A court of justice?—We dare not even offer ourselves as witnesses; still less may we be plaintiffs. A Negro has no rights. Every European, even a stranger may lash him with impunity, and if the Negro lifts up his hand against him, it is death.

WILLIAM.

(*Gnashing his teeth.*) Excellent!—But does not love at least sometimes cast a brightening ray over your perpetual night?

TRURO.

Love?—Here you are opening an old wound of mine. When I was a young, lively boy, I loved a Negro girl in another plantation; but such marriages are forbidden, and I have consequently been very unhappy!

WILLIAM.

Forbidden?

LILLI.

Is not every thing forbidden here? We may venture to marry against the will of our parents, but not without the consent of our master.

TRURO.

When your good father made me free, I took a wife, but my children are slaves.

WILLIAM.

You are however permitted to have children?

LILLI.

They dare not love and honor us.

TRURO.

Nor can we leave any thing to them, we have no property.

LILLI.

And do you not imagine it must make a father's heart ache to see his children harnessed like horses to a carriage?

WILLIAM.

What are you saying?

TRURO.

She tells no lie, our master frequently goes out in a burning sun, with six Negroes to draw him.

WILLIAM.

Holy God! is it possible? (*He wipes his eyes.*)  
I must drink up my tears. (*He pours out some coffee.*)

TRURO.

Yes, yes, my good master, you find a sweet flavor in the coffee, but if you could count the bitter tears that have been shed over that sugar.—

WILLIAM.

(*Just as he was going to drink it, puts down the cup, bides his face and runs out.*)

TRURO.

(*Following him with his eyes.*) The perfect image of his father.—God blefs him!

LILLI.

If he was black, I should love him.

ADA.

Ah! but he cannot help me!

TRURO.

When we shall stand all together, black and white, before God's throne—

LILLI.

When color shall be no more a crime.

ADA.

And when Nature again resumes her rights.

TRURO.

Then shall no Overseer exercise his whip over  
us! (Exit TRURO.

LILLI.

Heaven is sweet! There no sugar-canes are  
cultivated. (*She runs away.*)

ADA.

Oh my husband! There I shall again find  
thee! [Exit.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

## ACT II.

## SCENE I.

*A great Field, in which several Negroes are employed in cultivating Sugar-Canes, in planting, cutting, or weeding them.\*—In the Foreground of the Theatre, on the right hand, a Grave is seen, and on the left, an Arbor.*

*[The Negroes sing at their Work, to a simple touching Air;]*

The bread of slavery, moist with bitter tears,  
Sustains unwelcome life thro' toilsome years;  
Come, kind deliverer, death! Come, "Mifery's Friend!"  
Lead to that tranquil home where forrows end.

*During the Song, Enter WILLIAM and TRURO.*

WILLIAM.

WHERE are you leading me? I hear founds of lamentation every where.

TRURO.

This is my favorite spot. Look around, good master, does your heart say nothing?

\* The Manager will judge which of these employments will best suit the Theatre.

WILLIAM.

God!—This grave—

TRURO.

Your father's.

WILLIAM.

(*Throws himself on the grave.*) My father—my good father!—Who planted these rose-trees around this grave?

TRURO.

The poor Negroes did that, from love and gratitude. Nature has given them a heart and flowers, they have nothing beside.

WILLIAM.

What a pious chill pervades my limbs! (*with eyes and hands raised*) Father, I dare not wish that thy spirit should hover over this dust. Such a sight, such a song of lament would embitter to thee the joys of heaven.

TRURO.

It is a comfort to believe that he sees and pities us.

WILLIAM.

Why was he buried just here?

TRURO.

He chose it. He usually sat here, and overlooked the works. If either of us had any trou-

E



ble at heart, he directly came and told it with modest confidence; and he was always assisted.—But now—How often am I forced to be a witness of a famished slave's presenting himself before the Overseer, folding over his skin like a coat, and putting out of his mouth a tongue, parched like a dry leaf. A lash of the whip is the usual answer.

WILLIAM.

What enemy of my peace inspired me with the idea of returning to this land of torments! —But no! I have visited my father's grave,—I will make a sacrifice of good actions to his ashes; and then away!—Away from this coast!—Whither?—To England, into the arms of that man, whose noble heart has made him an orator in the cause of humanity—to Denmark, to the feet of that prince who was the first to break the chains of these unhappy wretches, and who received tears of gratitude for gold.

TRURO.

If you had only arrived a year sooner, you would have found it very different. How often in the evening, when our work was over, have we danced and sung on this spot! our old master was then sitting in the midst of us, reviving us with a variety of liquors, and was delighted when we grew merry, when the kettle-drum resounded, and that we beat time, clapping, on our hands.—The brandy was in those days unmixed

with water, or with soap, to make it froth.—So little is sufficient to animate the Negro, give him but a bagpipe and a glass of genuine rum, and he will work for weeks together without murmuring. Your good father was very sensible of that. (*He sighs*) This is over!—Those happy times will come no more.—I planted this arbor to his memory, and I offer water it with my tears.

## SCENE II.

*A Negro-Woman enters with a dead Child in her Arms.*

NEGRO-WOMAN.

(*Wildly and out of her senses*) Away! away! this place belongs to my child!

WILLIAM.

(*Jumping up*) God! what is that!

NEGRO-WOMAN.

(*On her knees close to the grave*) Rest quietly here, poor worm. There, underneath, resides a good man who will protect thee.

WILLIAM.

(*Shuddering*) Truro, what does this mean? the child bleeds.

NEGRO-WOMAN.

*(Looks round, laughing)* It bleeds? Certainly it bleeds. Look at these drops on my gown—and these—and these—one—two—three—

WILLIAM.

Whose child is it?

NEGRO-WOMAN.

*(She presses it in her arms most ardently)* It is my child!

WILLIAM.

Who killed it?

NEGRO-WOMAN.

*(Smiling)* I killed it.—Who but a mother could take pity on her own child?

WILLIAM.

God have mercy on thee, unfortunate mother!

NEGRO-WOMAN.

Aye, God have mercy on me!

WILLIAM.

Why didst thou this?

NEGRO-WOMAN.

Ought not the mother to take care of her child?

WILLIAM.

What impelled thee to this horrible deed?

NEGRO-WOMAN.

Maternal love! My poor child would have been many a long year tormented; whereas, now its torments lasted only three days.—It was born three days ago.—I was very weak and ill, the Overseer came, and desired me to press some sugar between some heavy metal cylinders. I was not able to do this, and therefore he beat me.—(*Uncovering her shoulder*) See, how he scourged me, see how the scars of the whip extend from my neck quite down, over my breast.—And whenever, after, I wished to give milk to my child, there came out blood.—Two days did my poor child live upon blood, which it sucked from the swellings, and it cried so pitifully—(*Smiling*) Now it cries no more.

WILLIAM.

Ah! what hast thou done!

NEGRO-WOMAN.

My duty. Would to God, my good master, that my mother had destroyed me at the time I was born! I have no joy in the world! God has created Blacks only to suffer. I was stole from my parents, when an infant, and sold for a copper kettle. My days dragged on between work and hunger, and my nights were passed in fe-

verish sleep and tears, till they gave me a husband that I might bring more slaves into the world. Three times did I hope and fear to become a mother, three times I miscarried from over-work. We are used worse than dogs in the same situation, for they are spared and left at home; but the Negro-woman must work till she rolls in the sand with the pains of child-birth. This child was the first ray of joy that shone upon my life. I heard its little voice. It lay upon my breast—I rejoiced. I felt what joy is to a happy being!—Sweet intoxication of motherly love! Alas! it is vanished.—I have been waked to new torments, to new redoubled torments. I was not to suffer alone, any more—this poor creature was to share my torture. When the Overseer scourged me—God knows! I bore it patiently, and covered my child with my arms—but a stroke chanced to fall on my child—I then went out of my senses—I then drove a nail into its heart—It did not cry—It just moved once—and see, it is dead—would to God, my good master, my mother had been as compassionate, and had destroyed me at the time I was born!

WILLIAM.

(*Quite subdued*) My heart will break!

TRURO.

(*Wiping the tears from his eyes*) I have lived through many such scenes, and yet I cannot grow accustomed to them!

## NEGRO-WOMAN.

Flow gently, innocent blood ! flow down and wash the bones of a man who was pious and good. Ah ! here rests a dead man—he was white, but humane. He compassionated me, he bought me, because I was unhappy. He died soon after, and I am again unhappy ! but this will not last long ! No, not much longer ! They will torture me for loving my child so much, I am sick and weak, and shall not survive their tortures. God be thanked ! I shall die soon !—thou weepest !—Can a white man weep ?—let me see—they really are tears—do not cry—give me those tears—I am so poor, that I have no more even of them.—I washed my child's wound with my last tears. (*WILLIAM covers his face, and throws himself on a bench in the arbor.*) See there, a white man, who has humanity. Go down to that dead man ; here above-ground, you stand alone among your brethren.—Hark ! what was that ? did not I hear the Overseer's voice ?—Good night, dear child ! Sleep well—Now, they will scourge thy mother, but thou art taken away from misery.—Rest quietly upon this grave—rest tranquilly—sleep well—(*She kisses the child once more, and is going*) No, I cannot however leave it here ! It is dead, but the mother's heart yet lives—Oh my child ! my

child! (*She presses it in her arms, and runs away, with marks of despair.*)

TRURO.

You are crying, good maffer? Alas! that does me good!—I have not seen it a long time.

WILLIAM.

(*Hiding his face*) Leave me alone, Truro.

TRURO.

You are not alone. The spirit of your father hovers around you—the spirit of the father of us all! (*He kneels close to the grave*) Oh thou good old maffer! Oh that I could with my nails tear thee up from the earth!

### SCENE III.

*The Negroes quitting their Work, and coming forward.*

NEGRO.

Come brother, the Overseer is far off.

ANOTHER.

You are praying, Truro? We will pray with you.

A THIRD.

Alas! He no longer hears us!

TRURO.

What do you want, brother?

NEGRO.

Help from our old master.

TRURO.

What is dead, is dead.

NEGRO.

Say not that. If he is quite dead, to what purpose was he so good? and if every thing dies with us, to what purpose do we suffer so much?

ANOTHER.

He will hear us. Kneel down on the grave.  
(*They kneel.*)

A THIRD.

Dear master, help us!

A FOURTH.

Our misery is great!

ALL.

Good old master, help us!

NEGRO.

My strength is exhausted.

SECOND.

My back bleeds.



THIRD.

My wounds have no time to heal.

FOURTH.

They give me bad manioc \* to eat.

FIFTH.

And we are not allowed any sleep.

SIXTH.

Neither sleep, nor joy,

SEVENTH.

Help us, master, thou wast formerly so good !

ALL.

Ah, thou wast so good !

NEGRO.

Thou forgavest my disobedience.

SECOND.

In sickness, thou revivedst me with wine.

\* Le présent le plus précieux que les îles aient reçu de l'Afrique, c'est le manioc. C'est une plante délicate, la culture en est pénible. On ne peut le faire servir à la nourriture des hommes, qu'après lui avoir donné une préparation très-fatigante, pour extraire les parties aqueuses qui sont un poison froid, contre lequel il n'y a aucun remède connu, ou donne le nom de Cassave à la pâte de manioc, changée en Gâteau par la seule attention de la faire cuire sans la remuer. Raynal's Hist. Phil. & Poli. tom 4. p. 185.

THIRD.

Thou gavest my old father his liberty.

FOURTH.

Thou recoveredst my children from the small-pox.

TRURO.

He was the father of us all !

ALL.

That he was.

TRURO.

Thank him yet in the grave.

NEGRO.

Rest quietly with our blessing. (*All prostrate themselves, and kiss the grave*)

WILLIAM.

(*In the arbor, deeply affected*) Who would not exchange the marble over the conqueror's grave for this living monument !

NEGRO.

Thy son is hard and unfriendly.

ANOTHER.

Hush ! rather accuse the Overseer.

THIRD.

Give us thy other son for our master.

FOURTH.

His person resembles thine.

FIFTH.

He will be good like thee.

(WILLIAM, quite overcome, walks out of the arbor.)

ALL.

There he is ! (*They jump up and surround him*)  
Be thou our master !

WILLIAM.

I thank you, my children ! I will endeavour to  
mend your lot.

NEGRO.

God blefs you !

WILLIAM.

Would it were in my power to do you  
much good !

NEGRO.

We are already comforted by what you say.

ANOTHER.

And because your benevolent eyes say a great  
deal more.

THIRD.

See brothers, he weeps !

ALL.

(*Pressing round him*) He weeps ! He weeps over  
our wretchedness.

WILLIAM.

Have hope, poor men ! It will be better with  
you. There lives a man in England who loves

you, who is day and night meditating your relief, and who, warmed with the glorious fire of philanthropy, defends your rights with fervid eloquence.

THE NEGROES.

Blessings light on that good man, who is a stranger to us!

ANOTHER.

Tell us his name.

WILLIAM.

His name is WILBERFORCE.

NEGRO.

God of Heaven! Inscribe his name in thy book!

WILLIAM.

The slave-trade shall cease. No more of your brethren shall be imported here.

NEGRO.

Blessings attend them! while we shall be in misery!

WILLIAM.

And your burden will be lighter too.

NEGRO.

Consoling words!

ANOTHER.

Hope, sweet as palm-wine!

WILLIAM.

I will entreat my brother to make this a day of joy to you.

NEGRO.

Do so, good master, that we may not quite forget to be happy.

WILLIAM.

*(To ZAMEO, who a little at a distance from the rest, was leaning against a tree)* And who are you, quiet young man, from whom no complaint escapes?

ZAMEO.

I am contented with my fate.

NEGRO.

He lies. 'Tis he composed the hymn to death, which we are always singing.

WILLIAM.

Do you wish to die?

ZAMEO.

Oh yes.

WILLIAM.

But you would prefer having your freedom?

ZAMEO.

Death makes us free.

WILLIAM.

Have you no connections in the world?

ZAMEO.

Alas! I know not.

WILLIAM.

How came you into slavery?—You do not answer?

NEGRO.

He always serves us so. He never will return our confidence.

WILLIAM.

Set him the example, and tell me, each of you, how you were betrayed out of your liberty and native land.

TRURO.

Betrayed! That is the right word. The first Spaniards pretended that they came from the Happy Island, where our deceased fathers and friends reside. What poor credulous beings we were!—Whoever had lost a husband, a father, a son or a brother, cheerfully embarked, and became a slave.

NEGRO.

The Portuguese stadtholders sold the right of hunting men with dogs.

ANOTHER.

They mark us with hot irons, under the pretence that in Portugal none are of any value who do not bear such a mark under their shoulder.

TRURO.

In this manner did they treacherously deceive our harmless fathers. They were marked as criminals, when in the midst of serenity and innocence, they knew no transgression. If you should ever meet a company of wretches like these, you would take them for a string of malefactors. Mind and body are both subdued by affliction and chains; their heads are fixed between great wooden forks, supported behind with iron cramps; not one can stir a step without the other; all walk in procession panting under the heavy fork.—Their fettered hands are not at liberty to wipe off the sweat. It is with tears alone that they can wash the blood and sweat from their faces.—In this manner you conduct your slaves to market. Your cattle at least go free to the slaughter-house.

WILLIAM.

God! You knew all this, and yet was not on your guard?

TRURO.

I was sold, a prisoner of war. My countrymen fought very few battles formerly, and when-

ever they did, it was for a dozen of fish, or a handful of salt; but now they massacre each other daily that they may sell those who are left. Those who escape the small-pox are destroyed by the Europeans. We traded formerly in dried fish, linen, wax and ivory. But from you we have learnt to trade in men.

## NEGRO.

I was violently forced away, while I was mending my fishing-nets without fear on the shore.

## ANOTHER.

On board the ship, I lost every thing I had, and at last, myself.

## THIRD.

I stole a tobacco-pipe, and was sold for that.

## FOURTH.

It is only since the Whites came amongst us, that we have learnt to steal.

## FIFTH.

They have made us so rich in wants, that we want every thing.

## SIXTH.

Necessity prompted my parents to sell me when I was very little.

F



WILLIAM.

(To ZAMEO.) And now it is thy turn. Art thou still silent?

NEGRO.

It is in vain. He never speaks of his own adventures.

ANOTHER.

He lives to himself. He cries by night.

WILLIAM.

Have you no confidence in me?

ZAMEO.

Why do you want to see my wounds bleed?

WILLIAM.

I will heal them.

ZAMEO.

That thou canst not.

WILLIAM.

Have you committed a crime?

ZAMEO.

No.

WILLIAM.

Are your sufferings greater than those of your brethren?

ZAMEO.

Alas! yes.

WILLIAM.

Haft thou lost more than liberty?

ZAMEO.

I have lost all.

WILLIAM.

And with liberty, couldst thou not regain al?

ZAMEO.

No.

WILLIAM.

Then he is the poorest among ye. (*He approaches him, and puts his hand on ZAMEO's shoulder.*) Young man, if I could but gain your confidence, as you have gained my compassion—

ZAMEO.

Good master, your color does not dismay me; I plainly see that you mean honorably.

WILLIAM.

Then open your heart to me.

ZAMEO.

You will have it so? Be it so! Neither levity or crimes weigh heavy on my heart. Choice gave me the fetters of slavery.—When I, a year ago—

A NEGRO.

(*Calling aloud.*) The Overseer is coming.

ALL.

Away! away to work.

WILLIAM.

Remain. I will protect you.

F 2

NEGRO.

No, good master, you cannot. He scourges us. Away! Away! (*they all disperse.*)

WILLIAM.

Shame take the man, from whom all of them fly as from a tiger!

TRURO.

Oh! He is as savage as the African dog of the woods, which steals children and sheep, and which none dare kill, because it is held sacred.

WILLIAM.

And in such a man my brother confides?

TRURO.

Master Paul understands hypocrisy and flattery, how to torment the Negroes, and to rob his master. A rich man is like a sea-dog which little fish are always sucking, while they live on the slime which evaporates from him.—Go into the arbor, good master, there you may witness, without being seen, how he plagues the poor Blacks.

WILLIAM.

Oh! I have already seen too much! (*He conceals himself in the arbor with TRURO.*)

## SCENE IV.

*Enter the Overseer and Ayos.*

OVERSEER.

There, go, and seek thy son. In the mean time I will overlook the fields. On my return, you must go to work. [*Exit on the other side.*]

AYOS.

I can go no further. Expectation, impatience, anguish and joy, have exhausted me.—I feel just as if I was wading through tall reeds, and that the sun was darting directly on my head.—And yet—if I could but see him—if I could only know which is he?—(*he looks all round*)—Zameo! —my son Zameo!

ZAMEO.

(*In the back scene at work*) Who calls?

AYOS.

God! I hear his voice.—How it overcomes me.—Zameo! my son! (ZAMEO walks forward, his father stretches out to him both his trembling arms. ZAMEO, frightened, stops a few steps from him. With fixed eyes, he considers him a moment, and then trembling, falls down on both his knees, his father totters up to him, and falls into his arms.)

ZAMEO.

(*After a silent pause.*) No dream—no ghost.

AYOS.

Now I will die with all my heart!

ZAMEO.

Is it you, father?

AYOS.

It is, my son.

ZAMEO.

What wretch sold thee? What devil hath robbed me of the last consolation I had, that of procuring rest to thy old age through my misery?

AYOS.

It was my own doing, my son; I am come to free thee.

ZAMEO.

To free me?

AYOS.

Thou hast worn my chains a year. Return them to me.

ZAMEO.

Never more!—How, father, couldst thou be so cruel as to forsake my old mother?

AYOS.

(*After a pause.*) She has forsaken me.

ZAMEO.

I understand thee.—She is dead—(*a pause of anguish.*) But my brothers?—

AYOS.

(*Hesitating.*) They have—— accompanied their mother.

ZAMEO.

(*Shuddering.*) Dead too! but their little children?

AYOS.

(*With a voice half suffocated.*) They are —— gone after their parents.

ZAMEO.

(*Wringing his hands*) All dead!

AYOS.

All dead.

ZAMEO.

Horrid echo!—Hast thou heard nothing of my wife?

AYOS.

Nothing.

ZAMEO.

All dead!

AYOS.

At last there came a cloud of locusts that ate my little rice and millet. Then I ran to the

shore, and would have drowned myself in the sea.—Suddenly I saw a face, too horridly known to me. It was the same Captain who had carried thee to Jamaica. I embraced his knees and begged him to take me. The stern man enquired my price? The sight of my son, I exclaimed. Then he put on a savage ironical smile, and pushed me down into a small room, where more than 400 of my brethren lay in piles upon each other; for a ship which with difficulty holds 200 men, has 452 slaves and 36 Europeans crowded into it.—They bound me and a young man together. From above, a long heavy chain was drawn through us all. None could stand upright without the rest; the weary, the sick, the sleeping, and the dead.—Yes, dead—for putrefaction often forced us to call out to our executioners, that there was one happy one amongst us! The other wretches were fed with peas and beans. The crying children were put into sacks; rough men gagged their mouths. I slept to the sound of sighs and curses; and was waked by lamentations. Here one cursed the hour of his birth; there another laughed loud in a phrenzy-fever. Here one prayed for deliverance, while another cursed his Maker. Bedewed with sweat, we often thirsted for a drop of water, and our parched tongues were moistened only with our tears. A breath of fresh air was a rare enjoyment. If ever we came on deck,

we looked back to our native country till we grew petrified. This prospect threw several of my companions into a silent melancholy, the melancholy proceeded to deep affliction, and at last to surpassing despair. The wish to die enflamed every heart, the name of death resounded from all the lips around. Our executioner had foreseen this, and endeavored to trick even death itself. They would not leave us the smallest strip of linen to cover our nakedness, for fear that we should hang ourselves with it.

ZAMEO.

Oh father! You give me my own history!

TRURO.

(*In the arbor, with a sigh*) And mine.

AYOS.

It is in the power of a tyrant to deprive us of all the blessings of heaven, excepting death! He can embitter that, but he cannot prevent it. My unhappy companions found every contrivance fruitless, to escape from their misery. Here lay one, who starved himself to death; there another who fractured his skull against the sides of the ship; here, a third suffocated himself by swallowing his tongue.

ZAMEO.

Cease, father. Was I not myself a witness of these horrid expressions of despair?



TRURO.

(*In the arbor*) And I!

AYOS.

See, my son, I suffered all with fortitude, for the joy of seeing you once more, and loosing your chains.

ZAMEO.

Alas! You know not what you ask; your feeble old age is incapable of supporting such misery.

AYOS.

Have I not gone through the worst already?—Here is fresh air.—Oh! with air, bread, and a good conscience! all the rest is light to bear.

ZAMEO.

You know not the fate that awaits you. Of an evening when every bird sleeps at liberty on its twig, you will be shut up in a little low house. A room, twenty feet long, wainscotted off into three divisions, is entirely filled with slaves. You have light and air just peeping through the door which is seldom opened, and in the remotest separation, you have no light nor air at all.—A hard plank serves you for bed; a barrel to hold roots, a watering-pot, and a calabash—See, these are all thy riches. If, notwithstanding the misery and groans around you,

it should be possible for you to obtain towards the morning a little sleep, the whip of the cruel Overseer suddenly wakes you ; it wakes you from a swoon into which you are sinking from weakness ; they even try to wake you from death, when you are at your last struggle. You must work while you are dying. Rest is only for the dead. The European serves us as we do the palm-tree ; we extract the juice, and let the dead stick remain. They are unprofitable serpents of Fetiche, which we must feed sumptuously.—Our food is frogs, lizards, field-mice, and manioc.—Manioc ! a poison for every beast, only corrected by particular preparation. But who attends to a dish that is to be served up only to slaves ? Of course, follow the most horrible diseases, the most loathsome sores—a deserted death ! Do you feel, father, all the wretchedness expressed in these few words, a deserted, painful death ?—

AYOS.

(*Affected, falls into his arms*) I shall not die forsaken ; my son will never forsake me !—

ZAMEO.

Oh my father ! why hast thou deprived me of my sweetest consolation, that of dreaming thou wert either in liberty or dead !

AYOS.

Am I unwelcome to thee ?

## ZAMEO.

Torment me not!—Oh blest moment! when the father for the first time entered his son's house as his guest!—How every thing is embellished by the hand of affection! how was the best of every thing, for many long weeks before, preserved for this dear visit! how joyfully we, all of us, waked on that happy day! To-day! to-day he comes!—how the little children, peeping through the windows, cry, Is he not coming yet?—Now they spy him, now they surround him, lead him, and pull him in.—One brings him this, another that, each will have his share, each will be taken notice of, the least as well as the biggest.—He smiles, and heaven smiles with him; he is happy, and the cottage becomes a palace. He gives his blessing, and it becomes a temple!—Oh my father! how often with delight has my warm imagination represented this picture to me, when yet I had a house, and a wife lying in my bosom.—But here, where I have nothing to refresh thee with—No mat, whereon to lay thy head—no sweet fruits—no draught of palm-wine.

## AYOS.

(*Exhausted and leaning on him*) Filial love is more reviving than palm-wine.

## ZAMEO.

(*Anxious*) How art thou, father?—Art thou ill?—

AYOS.

Be quiet, my dear son—'Tis only joy—fetch me a draught of water, I am thirsty.—

ZAMEO.

Quick as an arrow!—In the mean time, be seated on our old master's grave. This little hillock covers a faint, this earth exhales strength. (*He leads the old man to the grave, and is going out.*)

## SCENE V.

*Enter the OVERSEER.*

OVERSEER.

(*Lays hold of ZAMEO*) Where are you going?

ZAMEO.

To fetch a draught of water for my father.

OVERSEER.

Nonsense! Noon is yet far off, away to work.

ZAMEO.

Did you understand me? the old man is thirsty.

OVERSEER.

Did you understand me? Away to work.

ZAMEO.

Monster ! and if it costs me my life—(*He attempts to go on.*)

OVERSEER.

Not from this spot ! (*He treats him roughly.*)

AYOS.

Oh my son !

ZAMEO.

(*Stooping down*) See'st thou now, father ? Did I not say true ?

(*WILLIAM and TRURO coming out of the arbor.*)

WILLIAM.

Stop ! no cruelty in my presence !

OVERSEER.

The dog rebels.

TRURO.

Be quiet, Zameo ; I will refresh your father with a draught of rum. (*He reaches a calabash to Ayes.*)

ZAMEO.

The great Numbo blefs thee !

AYOS.

And return it to thee in thy children !

TRURO.

Then will he give me a son like thine.

WILLIAM.

*(Puts money into Ayo's band)* Take this, old man, and comfort thyself.

ZAMEO.

Thanks ! thanks ! It is giving it to me.

OVERSEER.

Sir William, you spoil the people, your goodness blinds you. You know not these men. They are all lie and deceit, they are ungrateful and perfidious, they would with all their hearts poison every one of us. *(ZAMEO jumps up suddenly, seizes an instrument which lies in his way, and kills a serpent with it, which at that very moment was going to sting the OVERSEER.)*

OVERSEER.

*(Alarmed)* What are you doing there ?

ZAMEO.

*(Holding up the serpent)* Do you not see ? *(He flings it away.)*

TRURO.

Ah ! Paul ! it was very near over with you.

WILLIAM.

*(Runs up to ZAMEO)* Come to my arms, noble youth !

AYOS.

(*Cheerfully*) Good master, take back your gold. My son did that ! who is richer than I ?

ZAMEO.

Does that merit praise ? I did it without reflecting.

TRURO.

What think you now, Paul ? Are the Negroes verily such perfidious creatures ?

OVERSEER.

(*Shewing some uneasiness*) What kind of serpent was it then ?

TRURO.

The most poisonous ; a spectacle-snake.\* In a few minutes, you would have fallen dead on the ground.

OVERSEER.

Indeed ? A spectacle-snake ?—Hem ! Zameo, that was kind and brave of thee ; there, take this crown, and drink till Sunday.

ZAMEO.

Give me the crown on some other occasion. What I did, cost me nothing, and I should repent it, if I was paid for it.

\* It is so called from the strange resemblance on the hood, or back of its head and neck, to a pair of spectacles. It is also called the Cobras de capello, le serpent couronné des Indes, and the hooded serpent.

OVERSEER.

Fool!

WILLIAM.

Man! It was always my opinion, till now, that God had formed us of the same materials; I was under a mistake, he made you of better.

ZAMEO.

My good master, I do not understand you.

WILLIAM.

Go, Paul, he has made you doubly ashamed.

OVERSEER.

Nonsense: he did his duty.

WILLIAM.

Zameo, I pray thee, honor me with thy friendship.

ZAMEO.

Master, you mock me.

WILLIAM.

My heart is no insulter.

ZAMEO.

I am only a poor slave.

WILLIAM.

(*With enthusiasm*) Thou art the richest man on earth!

G.



AYOS.

He is my son ! He is my son !

WILLIAM.

Happy father !

ZAMEO.

You make me ashamed.

## SCENE VI.

*Enter JOHN.*

JOHN.

Well ! What are you standing there idling ?

OVERSEER.

*(Shakes the whip)* Out to work !

AYOS.

*(Rousing himself, and falling at JOHN's feet)*  
Master, when your Captain formerly purchased me, and payed a few crowns for an infirm old man ; there came this active, strong youth, who suffered himself to be fettered in my place, and has been above a year cultivating your fields. He took my chains voluntarily, I come now voluntarily to loosen them.

JOHN.

A most fine exchange.

ZAMEO.

*(Throws himself at JOHN's feet)* Listen not to the old man's request ! He is sick and weak, he can be of little use ; I am healthy and strong, I can work longer.

JOHN.  
Of course.

AYOS.  
You have paid for me, not for him. You have no right over my son.

ZAMEO.  
No right ? did I not put on thy chains unforced ? Has he not liked the exchange ?

AYOS.  
I once consented to it. But now I demand the restoration of the place which belongs to me. I am your father, and I desire obedience from you.

ZAMEO.  
Never ! Affection and duty outweigh thy commands.

AYOS.  
Attend not to him ! What I ask is justice.

ZAMEO.  
Attend not to the intoxication of fatherly love ! think of your own interest.

G 2

JOHN.

Fear not. Ha ! ha ! ha ! I must laugh indeed. You are quarrelling for the privilege of being my slave, when in fact you both are my slaves already.

ZAMEO.

Only I ! I put on his chains.

AYOS.

Only I ! You bought me.

JOHN.

It is all the same. I keep you both.

AYOS.

That you cannot. I will inform against you.

JOHN.

(*Laughing*) Where ?

AYOS.

Before God !

ZAMEO.

My father is free, he came a volunteer in your ship ; you have paid no price for him.

JOHN.

So ! You reckon as nothing the passage, and eating and drinking ? Who has paid me for that ?

ZAMEO.

(*Jumping up, goes to the OVERSEER, and says in a passion,*) Give me now the money which you offered me.

OVERSEER.

Leave me at peace.

WILLIAM.

Brother, I conjure you by the grave of our father, to act humanely. Give both of them their liberty!

JOHN.

And this you would call acting humanely? I should rather think it like a fool.

WILLIAM.

How much would you ask for the young man?

JOHN.

Pay me a hundred guineas, and I will give you the old man into the bargain.

WILLIAM.

(*Draws out his pocket-book.*) Here they are.

JOHN.

Are you in earnest?

WILLIAM.

I never sport with human happiness.

JOHN.

But there are serious follies too.

WILLIAM.

Take the money. Zameo is mine.

JOHN.

As you please.

ZAMEO.

(*To WILLIAM*) Joyfully your slave ! but my father !

WILLIAM.

He is free. Come here, old man.

AYOS.

My son, help me ! help me to the feet of the good white man ! (*ZAMEO raises him up, and leads him to WILLIAM, before whom he prostrates himself on his knees.*)

WILLIAM.

Kneel not, old man, you make me ashamed. Thou wast free, and thou art free. But with all thy liberty, it would be easy enough for thee to die with hunger, if I did not make thee a present to protect thee in future from want.—There ! I give thee thy son, he may work for thee. (*He pushes ZAMEO into the arms of AYOS.*)

TRURO.

(*Affected*) Spirit of my old master ! look down here, and rejoice !

JOHN.

Brother, if you go on in this way, I shall have to congratulate you soon on becoming a beggar.

WILLIAM.

I would sooner beg for bread, than for a cheerful heart. Every stranger may give you bread, but a cheerful heart can only spring from yourself. (*The father and son waking from their silent ecstasy.*)

ZAMEO.

(*Embraces WILLIAM's knees*) Fetters are needless where the affections are rivetted by beneficent actions. Thou hast left me free, and I am thy slave for ever; with my arms in bonds, I could have escaped, but thou fetterest my heart—I will never forsake thee!

AYOS.

I cannot speak—the great Numbo fees my heart and my tears—He will influence the benevolent Fetiche to be favorable unto thee, that as long as thou livest, thy cup may be full of palm-wine, and thy heart of joy!

TRURO.

Good master, how happy you must be! Nor all the gold of Tombuto would I take for this reviving spectacle.

WILLIAM.

(*Affected.*) What think you, brother? How many rich plantations would you give for such a moment?

JOHN.

I would not give a hundred pounds of sugar.

WILLIAM.

(*Folds father and son in his arms.*) Stay with me as long as you like. I am delighted in seeing those about me who love me.

TRURO.

Oh! We all love you!

WILLIAM.

Would to God I could give freedom to you all!

JOHN.

You would make an excellent economist.

WILLIAM.

Brother, a petition to you. Give your slaves this day, a holiday. Let them dance and drink. I will be answerable for the expence.

JOHN.

I should be too great a lofer to-day. It may happen another time, in bad weather.

WILLIAM.

The sky is clear, and we are glad: a glad heart

and fun-shine are well-suited. Come, brother, let thy soul for this once be tuned in unison with ours.

JOHN.

You will make a child of me. Well, let it be! to contradict your notion of my hard-heartedness.

WILLIAM.

I thank you.

JOHN.

(*To the OVERSEER*) Go and lash them hither, that they may dance. [*Exit OVERSEER.*]

WILLIAM.

And let your girls come down also. They are still more perhaps in need of a little gaiety than these poor wretches.

JOHN.

All, all may come. Go, Truro, fetch them.

TRURO.

Readily! readily! It is long since I had such a commission. For above a year the poor children have not been out of their cages.

[*Exit TRURO.*]

WILLIAM.

Thou art so quiet, Zameo?

ZAMEO.

Excuse me, good master! I cannot speak—Nor dance neither.



AYOS.

He is in the right. Joy is a child, it can only flammer.

WILLIAM.

Nor do I want him to express his joy in words. But I should like to see it sparkle in his eyes.

ZAMEO.

My joy is ungrateful in shewing itself so sparing of looks and words—but the surprise has stunned me.—Allow me a moment to myself.

[Exit ZAMEO.]

WILLIAM.

He is not in spirits.

AYOS.

A secret uneasiness preys upon him like the guinea muscle-worm.\*

WILLIAM.

Then his liberty is no blessing to him, for nothing but employment will lighten affliction.

\* The Guinea-worms or Dracunculi, or Muscle-worms, are a sort of long slender worms which breed in the muscular flesh of the arms, legs, &c. and are more frequent in some parts of Guinea than elsewhere, particularly on the Gold Coast about Anamaboe and Cormantyn. It is lodged between the interstices of the membranes and the muscles, where it insinuates itself to a prodigious length, sometimes exceeding five ells, and produces ulcers.

AYOS.

Do you think that none work but slaves?

JOHN.

No slave, no flogging: and without flogging little work.

*(The sound of Kettle-drums and other Negro Instruments is heard at a distance.)*

JOHN.

They are coming. They need not be told twice to dance and drink.

## SCENE VII.

*Male and Female Negroes, with Music, enter with the OVERSEER.*

WILLIAM.

*(Meeting them)* Enjoy yourselves, my children! and celebrate this day to the honor of your old master's memory.

*Chorus of Male and Female Negroes.*

Welcome joy to every breast!

Welcome to the heart oppress'd!

Live to-day,

Dance and play,

Thought and care be far away.

Shall tomorrow's slavish toil

Present joy and freedom spoil?

Live to-day, &c.

*(A Negro with a White Muzzle, and another with an Iron Collar and Horns, walking up to WILLIAM.)*

*The FIRST.*

Alas! my good master! we cannot enter into this gaiety; I can hardly draw my breath.

*The OTHER.*

I cannot move my neck, how could I dance?

WILLIAM.

Brother, what means this?

JOHN.

He with the collar on, had run away; he wears horns in order to be known. He who has the muzzle is a sot.

*The NEGRO.*

Alas! I own I drank now and then to forget my misery.

WILLIAM.

I intreat you, brother, take off their yokes, at least for to-day.

JOHN.

But they do not dance with their mouths, or their necks; their feet are free.

WILLIAM.

*(Supplicating)* Let transgressions and punishments be forgotten to-day.

JOHN.

You will spoil these people for a month to come. Well, Overseer, take off their ornaments. (*It is done; and both the Negroes gratefully embrace WILLIAM'S knees, and cheerfully mix among the rest.*)

### SCENE VIII.

*Enter TRURO, ADA, and LILLI.*

LILLI.

May I trust my eyes? if here is not dancing and joy!

JOHN.

Come, Ada, look, this is all owing to my love for you.

ADA.

I thank you.

LILLI.

Indeed?—If you begin to grow good, then you are verily in love. We must take advantage of such a whim, as of sun-shine in the rainy months. Come! brothers and sisters! (*She takes a Negro by the hand*) Come, my Congo countryman, you must dance with me. (*The Drum sounds, male and female Negroes dance their favorite dance, the Calenda, beating time with their hands.*)

WILLIAM.

(To ADA.) Mix with the gay.

ADA.

Must I cast a gloom over their joy?

JOHN.

Will you not dance, Ada?

ADA.

Excuse me---I have sprained my foot.

JOHN.

Sit here then, in the arbor, and enjoy the cheerful sight.

ADA.

(*Seats herself in the arbor, and grows melancholy.*)

JOHN.

Paul! my pipe! (*they bring him a lighted pipe, he seats himself on his father's grave, and smokes thoughtlessly.*)

WILLIAM.

(*With folded arms, leans against a tree, and looks on at the dancers. After a few minutes, ZAMEO appears. WILLIAM meets him.*) Are you come at last? Forget your sorrows in honor of the day, dance, and drink.

ZAMEO.

Let me alone, my good master, I have no joy in either.

WILLIAM.  
I intreat you.

ZAMEO.  
You may command.

WILLIAM.  
No command. Do it for love of me.

ZAMEO.  
For love of you? That I will.

WILLIAM.  
Come here, I will find you a partner.

ZAMEO.  
They are all the same to me.

WILLIAM.  
(*Conduſts him to the arbor.*) My good girl, I  
pray thee, dance with this young man.

ADA.  
(*Looks up.*) Zameo!

ZAMEO.  
Ada! (*they fall into each other's arms.*)

JOHN.  
(*Jumps up.*) What is this?

ZAMEO.  
Ada! my wife!

JOHN.  
Tear him from her.

WILLIAM.

Brother! what a fight!

*(The dance stops. All the Negroes and Negro-slaves collect round this group. ADA faints.)*

JOHN and the OVERSEER.

*(Laying hold of ZAMEO.)* Slave! let go!

ZAMEO.

*(Shaking them both off.)* Begone! she is my wife! no power on earth shall tear her from me.

JOHN.

Chains here!

WILLIAM.

No violence, brother, I have bought him.

JOHN.

*(To ZAMEO.)* Retire! or you are a dead man.

ZAMEO.

I will sooner die than leave Ada!

JOHN.

Come up, slaves! Overseer, exercise the whip! pull him from her, as you value your life!

*(The slaves fall upon ZAMEO, and separate him, and brave his furious defence of the lifeless ADA.)*

WILLIAM.

*(Who in vain endeavoured to protect ZAMEO.)*

From this time, I renounce thee as my brother!

JOHN.

As you will. The girl is mine! (*he folds her in his arms.*)

ZAMEO.

(*Looking that way.*) My wife in his arms!  
(*he falls down senseless.*)

*The curtain falls.*

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### ACT III.

#### SCENE I.

(*ADA's Room.*)

ADA continues in a fainting fit on a sofa. LILLI sits near her and endeavors to recover her.

LILLI.

SOME signs of life at last.

ADA.

(*Waking.*) Where am I?

LILLI.

In your Lilli's arms.

H



ADA.

Oh! you wake me from a sweet dream. Only think, I was dreaming—that it seemed to me as if—God! what could it be!—Was it a dream?—

LILLI.

Would to heaven!

ADA.

I was in Zameo's arms—

LILLI.

You were torn from each other.

ADA.

*(Jumping up.)* Ah! I did not dream it! Where is he? Where is my Zameo? *(She runs to the door, which she finds fastened.)*

LILLI.

You might save yourself that trouble. Alas! the door is locked and bolted, as the hearts of white men are.

ADA.

*(Shakes the door.)* Open it! Open it! Mercy! —*(She comes up hastily to LILLI.)* Lilli, what does this mean? Have they killed him? Tell me, tell me the truth!

LILLI.

Not yet, for what transgression had he committed?

ADA.

His love for me is a transgression.—Oh! Zamero here, and Ada separated from him! (*She runs again to the door*) Open! Open!

LILLI.

You will put the whole house in an uproar.

ADA.

What care I for the house, for the whole world! I will go to my husband! I will go! I will go! (*She tries to spring the door with violence.*)

LILLI.

You cannot.

ADA.

Alas! I cannot! Nor yet can I stay here!—(*She runs to the window and screams out.*) Help! Help!—God! Nobody hears me!—(*She comes to LILLI, and falls on her knees before her.*) Oh thou confidant of all my afflicted hours! my dear, best Lilli! help me!

LILLI.

How can I—

ADA.

(*Writting her arms towards Heaven.*) But God! thou canst! thou hast formed hearts for love, and this man for my heart! thou hast given wings to the pigeon, and courage to innocence!

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—Well! I will jump out of the window! (*She runs towards the window.*)

LILLI.

(*Stepping before her.*) Are you delirious!

ADA.

Is the anguish of an affectionate wife a delirium? Leave me! a good angel will protect me!

LILLI.

I shall not leave you. You are endangering your life.

ADA.

Can I risk less for him! better my life than my innocence! away! away! leave me!

LILLI.

(*Keeping her back with effort.*) Never!

ADA.

(*With concern.*) And you too!—you!—my anguish does not affect you—you have never loved! (*She flies again to the door.*) Zameo! Zameo! open! open!—ah! I hear the key clink—or is it chains?—Lilli, support me—he comes—

## SCENE II.

*Enter OVERSEER, and Ayos behind him.*

OVERSEER.

What a noise! would you turn the house out at window?

ADA.

Where is my husband?

OVERSEER.

In safe custody.

ADA.

Mercy! lead me to him!

OVERSEER.

You must not go out of this room.

ADA.

Tiger! you have a human face! have pity!

OVERSEER.

'Tis in vain.

ADA.

Hangman! tremble at the courage then, of an affectionate wife! (*She attempts to force her way out, the OVERSEER throws her on the ground.*)

OVERSEER.

Feeble creature! from this time, you remain imprisoned, our master will have it so. However, I bring you company here; this old man wanted to come to you. Keep yourself quiet, girl, and do not attempt to swim against the stream. Old man, I shall fetch thee again in a few minutes. (*He goes out and locks the door.*)

LILLI.

I should like to know what seat of honor the Devil will one day give this man in hell.

AYOS.

*(Overwhelmed with grief.)* My daughter!

ADA.

*(Raising herself slowly.)* Who art thou, old man?

AYOS.

Zameo's father.

ADA.

Thou his father? Thou my father! *(She embraces him)* God be thanked! here then is a man who understands me, who loves my Zameo; not as I love him—no! no! I am his wife. You are only his father;—but you can comprehend me, though my distress confuses me; your heart beats quicker when I repeat his name; you are not cold like her——

LILLI.

I forgive you in your grief.

ADA.

Oh father! Why did you curse your children?

AYOS.

Curse?

ADA.

Could they be so miserable if your blessing had been on their marriage?

AYOS.

Blessing you, I go to sleep every evening, and wake every morning; blessing you, I shall some day fall asleep for ever, and wake beyond this world.

ADA.

Where is my Zameo?

AYOS.

He lies bound under yon tree, and with his teeth he is gnawing the cords.

ADA.

Down! down! with red hot tears will I burn the cords to an ash!—oh father! save! save thy children.

AYOS.

What can a feeble old man do?

ADA.

Let us fly to the forest, to the mountains—

AYOS.

Fly? my good child! we are rigidly watched.

ADA.

So many, however, have escaped, to whom the mere thirst of liberty lent means and cou-

rage; oh! love is more mighty than liberty! come! come! it will succeed! and if thy feet are too weak, thy children will alternately carry the loved burden. Away! away to the mountains! there we shall be free as in the temple of Fetiche at Malfi.

AYOS.

Fruitless all! your master watches over the other slaves only with an eye of interest, but that of jealousy is perpetually fixed on you and Zameo.

ADA.

I will deform my body; I will tear my face with my nails! I will become hideous as a bat hanging to the fig-tree by its claws.—Zameo will love me still!

AYOS.

My good Ada! your anguish, your rage will destroy our last hope.

ADA.

Hope? Is there yet hope? oh I will grow gentle as a dove. See, I am quiet—quite quiet—What would you have? Quickly! what do you mean by hope?

AYOS.

With the greatest difficulty, and by means of a lie, have I succeeded in making my way to you. My son, your husband, is in danger of his life.

ADA.

Of his life? ah! open! open! (*she shakes the door violently.*)

AYOS.

Hear me.

ADA.

Zameo in danger of his life! while I am to listen to you! open! open!

AYOS.

You will hasten his death.

ADA.

(*In an agony.*) How—what must I do then?—  
Oh God! what must I do then?

AYOS.

The wicked John has threatened Zameo with a cruel death.—William spoke in vain with noble warmth for him. Zameo smiled and was silent. Then I threw myself on my knees in despair, and entreated, and promised to prevail with you to yield to your wicked master. Go! he wildly cried; use your endeavors, it is the only way to save your son.

ADA.

The only way? he is then lost! did Zameo hear these words?

AYOS.

He did hear them.



ADA.

And what said he?

AYOS.

He raised his eyes to Heaven, and shook his head.

ADA.

I thank thee, Zameo! I thank thee for this loud testimony of my fidelity! that look to Heaven, that shaking of the head, oh! this was more than words! never, never shall the tyrant fold thy faithful wife in his lascivious arms! thou canst die! and I too!

AYOS.

Nor indeed did I come here to beg my son's life at such a price. But dissimulation, dear Ada, dissimulation may gain us time, and time—deliverance.

ADA.

Dissimulation! look at me! look how I tremble, in every nerve, feel how my cheeks burn, my breast how it throbs; can I rule my pulse? Can I now dissemble?

AYOS.

But your husband's life——

ADA.

Can I work enchantments like our Priests of

Fetiché?—Go, tell your son he may rest satisfied,  
I am worthy of being called Zameo's wife.

AYOS.

Must he die?

ADA.

Not without me!

AYOS.

And what is to become of me?

ADA.

Be a screech-owl at midnight, a spectre on our  
grave.

AYOS.

Is it for this that I have been transported over  
the seas amidst a thousand cruelties?—

ADA.

Hush! my heart has no room for thy troubles.  
I can hear only Zameo's groans, I can see only  
his bonds.

AYOS.

Which you will not loose!

ADA.

Are only those in bonds who have cords around  
them? Alas! there are invisible iron fetters  
which no mortal can wrench! both soft and firm  
are the bonds of virtue, no force can loosen its  
strong ties, no sword divide it from my soul! it

has guided me from childhood to the age of woman, it presided over my marriage, it has attended me in all my wretchedness, nor will it forsake me at the hour of death.—Away! amulet formed of serpents heads, which a priest once gave me! *(She tears it from her neck, and casts it from her)* virtue is the only amulet! it cools in feverish heats, and warms in feverish chills! with virtue, as with love, one may live happily under a roof of palm-leaves! virtue and love give a life of serenity, and a gentle death.—Ah! what slumbering vigor is awakened in me! I am no more what I was, my heart expands, my bosom swells, some being which I do not know inspires me, an inward glow destroys fear and dries up my eyes! I have no tears—I tremble not—I can meet death!—Go, old man, say to my Zameo, thou hast found me thus; go, say to my tyrant, I await him.

AYOS.

*(Folds her in his arms.)* Ada! I am proud of being the father of thy beloved!

### SCENE III.

*The OVERSEER opens the door.*

OVERSEER.

Out, old man! you are wanted.

AYOS.

*(Reaching out his hand in great concern to ADA.)*

We shall see each other again!

ADA.

Free from all chains.

AYOS.

God give thee fortitude!

ADA.

Thee and me!

OVERSEER.

Come, old man!

ADA.

May not I go with him?

OVERSEER.

No.

ADA.

Monster! I laugh at you. Farewell, father!  
my heart follows thee.

OVERSEER.

Mad woman, console yourself with words.  
*(He leads out AYOS, and shuts the door.)*

ADA.

*(Eagerly to LILLI.)*—Thou really lov'st me,  
Lilli?

LILLI.

Dost thou not see what tears I shed over thee?

ADA.

Thou canst help me.

LILLI.

I?

ADA.

Furnish me with a knife.

LILLI.

A knife? for what?

ADA.

I do not absolutely know, but I want a friend in necessity.—It gives tranquillity to be able to command one's own destiny.

LILLI.

Ada! you have some horrid design in your head.

ADA.

Design? No. I swear to you I know not what I would have. The storm bends the tree here and there, and the weak twigs yield to the storm. Whether this arm is to save my innocence, or whether God has ordained me to be the avenger of thousands, I know not; but let me have a knife, that I may feel composed.

LILLI.

I have none.

ADA.

You will find no difficulty in eluding our spies. They do not watch you. Happy girl! they do not make love to you. Slip out as soon as you can.—Poison or a dagger will be equally welcome. Sister! sister! save me!

LILLI.

As soon as I can.

ADA.

You promise me?

LILLI.

*(Shedding tears.)* I promise you.

ADA.

Well, monster! in this manner I laugh at your power!

#### SCENE IV.

*Enter JOHN.—LILLI during this Scene glides out unremarked.*

JOHN.

*(Still in a cold, satirical tone.)* I hear you are resolved to make an heroic sacrifice to conjugal fidelity?

ADA.

Resolved? are love and aversion, things to resolve upon? I love Zameo, I abhor thee! the ugliest Negro of Bamba would be more welcome to me, than you.

JOHN.

Charming. You play your part in a high style. But it is a tone that does not suit me; I must beg you to take another key.

ADA.

No, nothing but this, and the rattle of death, will you ever hear from me.

JOHN.

Indeed? little obstinate fool! Do not abuse my patience. You see me placid; but one word, one look, and tortures shall be prepared for thee.—

ADA.

Love covers even a rack with roses, and diffuses peace upon a death-bed.—

JOHN.

Well, that we shall see, but you will not be mine?

ADA.

Never.









